



**Australian Earth Sciences Convention  
Media release -- Wednesday 23 July 2008**

## **Australia's tsunami risk unveiled**

**Information relating to tsunamis and other geological hazards, which only two decades ago took scientists days to accrue, is now being gathered in minutes and Australians are much safer as a result.**

This is the message that Dr Barry Drummond will deliver in his keynote address to the 2008 Australian Earth Sciences Convention today. The four day mega-conference is being held this week in Perth.

Dr Drummond, Head of the Earth Monitoring Group of projects at Geoscience Australia, will tell conference delegates how science is providing new tools to determine the likelihood of Australia being affected by tsunami, and to assess which parts of the Australian coastline are most likely to be affected and what infrastructure is most likely to be exposed.

Dr Drummond will also detail the workings of the more than 100 seismograph stations which now report in real time and form the basis of an Australian tsunami warning system, which has recently been brought online in response to the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami which killed more than 250,000 people.

Dr Drummond said: "The science with which we are working is developing very quickly and it is allowing us to answer many of Australia's more difficult geo-hazard questions.

"If a tsunami-causing earthquake occurred in the region to the north or east of Australia we would know about it and where it occurred within 6 minutes. Within 10 minutes we would know how big it is, and from that we would have an idea of the size of the tsunami we could be dealing with.

"We now access information in a minute or two which just 20 years ago would have taken hours or even days to generate, and this means Emergency Management Australia will now receive a warning at least 90 minutes before any tsunami reaches Australia."

Dr Drummond was appointed Head of the Earth Monitoring Group of projects at Geoscience Australia after the devastating Indian Ocean tsunami of 24 December 2004 saw the Australian Government move to establish an Australian Tsunami Warning System.

Dr Drummond is a member of the Geological Society of Australia, the Society of Exploration Geophysicists and the Australian Society of Exploration Geophysicists, and a member of the editorial board of the Australian Journal of Earth Sciences.

The **Australian Earth Sciences Convention** is Australia's premier geosciences conference and a major conference on the international geosciences calendar. It is hosted by the Geological Society of Australia and the Australian Institute of Geoscientists.

**Effectively several major conferences wrapped into one, the Convention boasts five key streams**  
– Resources – foundation for our future ■ Geoscience in the service of society ■ The evolution of life and the solar system ■ Earth's environments – past, present and future ■ The dynamic Earth – from crust to core.

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**What:** 2008 Australian Earth Sciences Convention  
**When:** Sunday 20 - Thursday 24 July 2008  
**Where:** Perth Convention & Exhibition Centre, Perth

**Dr Barry Drummond will deliver a plenary address to the Convention at 9:45am (Perth time) today (Wednesday). He will be available for interviews at various times during the day, after 6:30am Perth time (8:30am eastern). All media requests for Dr Drummond should be made through the Geoscience Australia media hotline on 1800 882 035.**

Find the **full program** for the Australian Earth Sciences Convention at [www.iceaustralia.com/aesc2008](http://www.iceaustralia.com/aesc2008). Media can access **suggested speaker and topic lists** (organised into subject headings and state-specific headings), as well as other background material, on the Media page of the website (abstracts are available from Patrick Daley). **A media highlights document for Day 3 (Wednesday)** of the Convention is also available on the Media page of the website.

**For media requests other than for Dr Barry Drummond (see media advice above), please phone Patrick Daley (Patrick Daley PR) on 0408 004 890.** Media planning to attend the conference must contact Patrick Daley to register their likely attendance and discuss any technical requirements.